Perhaps the least disruptive death is that of the wife; after a year's obligatory mourning the husband can re-marry. But a dead man is irreplaceable, and it is the death of men which destroys the expectations of the Lepchas. Thus Patek by the deaths of his father and grandfather was left the head of a household of six at the age of seventeen, and Tobgé was left alone with a wife and a young child at the age of twenty. Tobgé's case, however, was less desperate, for he was able to abandon his lonely home and go to live with Jiroong, his father's younger brother, who had previously been a *komok myok* and had therefore a separate establishment of his own.

At the other end of the scale there is old Kahlyeu who had two wives and twelve children; but all his sons died young and his daughters married away; and so at the age of seventy-seven, instead of living a life of ease, supported by his children and grandchildren, he has to work hard and lives alone with his grandson Chélé and the middle-aged widow of one of his brother's sons. His brother's family is settled in a distant village some way away. Kahlyeu is a rather melancholy, unhappy old man, but one of the shrewdest in the village. 'Times have changed', he complained once to me when I was asking about earlier conditions, 'since I was a boy; nowadays the youngsters know more than I do, and if I start telling them about the old times they rebuke me saying: "Why talk about that? It is all over and done with."' Similarly ninety-year-old Serving, almost completely in his dotage, without teeth and half-blind, has survived all his descendants and nearly all the members of his *ptso*, a century ago the most important in Lingthem; now he lives with the grandson of his elder brother, a rude and ungracious man, with his wife and baby son. Death, which has been so unmerciful in taking the young men has been equally unmerciful in letting these old lonely and unhappy men survive.

[p. 344 is blank]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

764 the Mun visits the *rumlyang* in future years he will see the soul grown to be an adult. There is no death in the *rumlyang*, but when I pointed out the contradiction of there being no death for the souls with the lamaist belief that the soul is reincarnated on earth, a compromise was reached by stating that the soul would die in the *rumlyang* if it were going to be reincarnated on this earth.

v

765 On the third day after the Sandé Kangyour or after the *sanglion* —according to which comes first—one Mani prayer-flag is erected ; on the twenty-first day a second is erected ; and on the forty-ninth as many as can be afforded up to the number of one hundred and eight. The cost of a single prayer-flag for the dead[7] is reckoned to be about a rupee ; the person setting it up provides the cloth and any competent lama can stamp it with the die which is kept in the monastery. The flag is inscribed with the most usual name of the person in whose intention it is erected written in Tibetan script. One flag for each dead person is usually set up in the monastery precincts, either the one put up on the third or twenty-first day. This prayer-flag is sanctified by a lama, usually the Dorjé Lapoon, reading a sacred book over it and sprinkling it with holy water (*tyü*), while a boy stands by holding two *chimi* on a plate ; it is set up with a shout and afterwards a procession of lamas, nuns and mourners walk round it and the monastery turning their prayer-wheels and chanting *Om ! mani pudme hum !* After the circum-ambulations are finished the whole procession prostrate themselves three times before the flag and touch the post first with their prayer-wheels, and then at a lower place with their foreheads.

The other prayer-flags set up outside the monastery precincts (they may be erected at the place where the corpse was disposed of or by his old home) are erected without any ceremony and may be put up by any layman. It is believed that the life of a prayer-flag will be proportionate to that of the person in whose intention it is erected ; a flag for a young person will be soon tattered and torn, while that for an old person will last longer. It is permissible for anybody to dismantle a ragged prayer-flag, but it is rather unwise for a person unrelated to the setter-up to do so ; for the setter-up might not consider it completely worn out, and in that case the

[7] Prayer flags for the living are slightly smaller and therefore less expensive ; there are two dies for these but only one for the benefit of the dead.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

person who dismantled it would have to provide a new one. If a person were to pull down a prayer-flag maliciously or in order to get the cloth (such a case occurred about twenty years ago) he would be fined Rs. 15.

A year after the death some more Mani prayer-flags are set up, and on that day a memorial ceremony called *lun-juk* is performed by lamas. This ceremony is held in the house where the deceased died; a Dorjé Lapoon must be present to read the proper books, a *kané* to play the musical instruments, and nuns to turn their prayer-wheels. Between a hundred and three hundred *chimi* are lit for this ceremony; since few people possess so many they borrow the lights either from neighbours or from the monastery; in the latter case they give a present of butter or oil in return. All the relations of the dead person should be present; but, if the deceased was a woman who had married a long way from her home, at least one representative of her family must be there, preferably her elder brother, or failing that her father or her uncle. After the performance of this ceremony the surviving partner, if the deceased was married, is free to marry again.

The Lepchas have formalised mourning very little. Until the *sanglion* members of the deceased's household wear rough old clothes and do not wash their hair; after that it is said that you can only distinguish a mourner by his sad face. People in mourning have to observe certain prohibitions. Any married person in any way connected with the dead man may not sleep with his spouse for three days after death, or until the corpse is disposed of, whichever period is the longer. If a spouse or parent or biological sibling dies the survivors are debarred for a year from marrying, or acting as *bek-bu* for another, or putting butter on sacrificial cups, or singing; during the period of mourning tables are never put in front of mourners, but always at the side. For affinal or classificatory relations these prohibitions are observed for forty-nine days.

Although the Lepchas do not dramatise their grief at the death of a near relation or friend their grief would appear to be sincere and deeply felt. The only time I saw a Lepcha cry was on the occasion of the erection of a prayer-flag in memory of the mother of the Mandal of Lungdeum, twenty-one days after her death. Two of her sisters had married men of Lingthem and were present at the ceremony; and as the flag was finally hoisted they burst into tears. There was no exhibition of grief; the women turned their backs on the rest of the company and cried quietly; when the

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

765 mourners dispersed they wiped their eyes and appeared soon after
152 to be in normal spirits. It seemed almost as though they were trying to hide their grief.

761 All the elaborate ceremonies which I have described are per-
764 formed to get rid of the dead; the dead are terrifying and should be feared, not loved. Death has no consolations.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but consists of a piece of cloth about sixteen feet in length, fringed at both ends. This is folded in two, wrapped round the body with the fringe at the top and fastened over the left shoulder with a bamboo pin: the right shoulder is left bare. A cord of some sort is worn round the waist; but before this is fastened the cloth is first pulled up so as to form a pouch, in which all sorts of odds and ends are carried: this serves the purpose of a pocket. If the man is a Lama he will wear his yellow sash as a belt; otherwise the *dum-dyum* is drawn in at the waist by means of a cord of some similar woven material. Hats are not often worn; but some people wear either a battered European Homburg (almost the commonest form of headgear in present-day Tibet), or the small maroon Tibetan hat (imported from China), topped with a coral button. Boys usually wear only the *dum-dyum*, with nothing beneath, a form of costume which leaves little to the imagination.

Women wear a one-piece cotton shift with a blouse of brightly coloured silk on top. Over this is worn a sleeveless one-piece garment reaching to the ankles. It is usually made of black or some dark-coloured velveteen, and fastened at the waist with a silken sash in the same way as the men's garment, so as to form a pouch or pocket. Women are always bare-headed; and neither sex wears any form of footgear.

I suppose clothes are occasionally washed, but this is not apparent. What is quite certain, however, is that the people themselves never wash and are indescribably filthy. "Though fond of bathing when they come to a stream in hot weather," notes Hooker, "and expert, even admirable swimmers, these people never take to the water for the purpose of ablution." It is said that people in mourning can always be recognised, for, to quote the Mandal's words, "Until the death ceremonies are completed the relatives wear only their oldest clothes, and do not trouble to wash their hair": but it would take a Lepcha to recognise the difference!

Round most houses there is usually a small garden, in which such things as peas, chillies and other vegetables and